

SCOTTISH MIGRATION – PROSPECTS FOR THE NINETIES

Isobel Lindsay

Both ecological concerns and demographic trends have stimulated interest in population issues. In particular the implications of zero population growth have been of increasing concern⁽¹⁾. In Scotland's case we have moved beyond zero growth into actual population decline and there are no reasons to assume that the factors which have produced that decline will alter spontaneously. This raises a wide range of public policy issues. Is the impact of these demographic trends positive or negative for Scottish society? If it is negative, are there policy initiatives which could modify these population factors? If we cannot expect to change trends, what are the implications for the labour market and the economy? What do we know about the motivation to migrate? We are currently in the familiar situation of waiting for social change to overtake us rather than anticipating its direction.

First what are the population changes which have taken place in Scotland and how are these developments likely to proceed in the nineties and beyond? The following illustrates the major changes in Scotland's population history since the mid-19th century. [See Table 1]

The one outstanding factor is the extent and consistency of population loss through out-migration. This is one of the most distinctive features of Scottish society. There has been no recorded period in which Scotland has had other than a loss from migration, peaking at 390,000 in 1921-31 and reaching its second highest level in 1961-71. The second factor of interest is the traditionally high birth rate which enabled a slow but steady population growth to be maintained despite migration loss until the 1970's. Table 2 illustrates the change in Scotland's position in comparison with other parts of the UK. Having had a higher fertility rate than England and Wales, the early eighties saw this fall to a level lower than theirs.

Migration loss in the context of high birth rates and continuing population growth is 'disguised'. When it is clearly identified as the cause of population decline, its significance increases. This decline in Scotland's birth rate is broadly in line with trends in most industrially advanced countries. Although now slightly lower than England and Wales, Scotland's birth rate is still higher than most Western European countries. Despite this there is only one other Western European country which has gone into population decline and that is the Irish Republic. The Scottish population is officially projected to go down to 4,999,000⁽²⁾ by 2001, a fall of 95,000 between 1988-2001. In the same period

TABLE 1: Intercensal and annual changes in births, deaths and migration and their effect on population, Scotland 1861 to 1981 and 1971 to 1988
(thousands)

Period	Population	Population increase or decrease	Changes affecting population						Other changes
			Births	Deaths	Natural increase	Estimated net civilian migration			
						Total	Remainder of U.K.	Overseas	
Census date	Intercensal changes in population present								
1861	3,062.3								
		297.7	1,124.3	708.0	416.3	-118.6	-	-	-
1871	3,360.0								
		375.6	1,234.3	765.5	468.8	-93.2	-	-	-
1881	3,735.6								
		290.1	1,252.6	744.8	507.9	-217.8	-	-	-
1891	4,025.6								
		446.5	1,280.5	780.7	499.8	- 53.4	-	-	-
1901	4,472.1								
		288.8	1,305.6	762.7	542.9	-254.1	-	-	-
1911	4,760.9								
		121.6	1,184.6	824.4 ⁽¹⁾	360.2	-238.6	-	-	-
1921	4,882.5								
		-39.5	1,004.9	652.5	352.4	-390.0	-330.0	- 60.0	- 1.9
1931	4,843.0								
		253.4	1,849.3	1,347.0 ⁽¹⁾	502.3	-220.0	-210.0	- 10.0	-28.9
1951	5,096.4								
		82.9	958.6	619.3	339.3	-282.0	-140.0	-142.0	25.6
1961	5,179.3								
		49.6	975.0	628.7	346.3	-326.5	-169.0	-157.5	29.9
1971	5,229.0								
		-98.3	696.7	638.1	58.6	-151.2	- 52.1	- 99.1	- 5.7
1981	5,130.7								
30 June	Annual changes in estimated population								
1971	5,235.6								
		- 5.0	83.0	64.2	18.8	- 28.6	- 14.8	- 13.8	4.8
1972	5,230.6								
		3.3	76.3	64.0	12.4	- 11.7	- 4.0	- 7.7	2.6
1973	5,233.9								
		6.9	71.0	64.2	6.8	- 3.0	5.0	- 8.0	3.1
1974	5,240.8								
		- 8.4	69.3	64.8	4.6	- 20.0	- 4.0	- 16.0	7.0
1975	5,232.4								
		1.0	67.6	64.9	2.7	- 5.8	- 0.4	- 5.4	4.1
1976	5,233.4								
		- 7.2	62.1	63.2	- 1.1	- 10.8	- 4.3	- 6.5	4.7
1977	5,226.2								
		-13.9	63.1	64.2	- 1.0	- 17.3	- 7.6	- 9.7	4.4
Continued next page									

Continued next page

TABLE 1 continued

Period	Population	Population increase or decrease	Changes affecting population							Other changes
			Births	Deaths	Natural increase	Estimated net civilian migration			Remainder of U.K.	
						Total	Overseas			
30 June			Annual changes in estimated population							
1978	5,212.3									
1979	5,203.6	- 8.7	66.8	65.0	1.8	- 14.6	- 7.1	- 7.5	4.1	
1980	5,193.9	- 9.7	68.5	64.2	4.3	- 16.3	- 9.9	- 6.4	2.3	
1981	5,180.2	- 13.7	69.4	62.8	6.6	- 23.1	- 5.0	- 18.1	2.8	
1982	5,166.6	- 13.6	67.2	65.8	1.5	- 14.9	- 0.9	- 14.0	- 0.2	
1983	5,150.4	- 16.2	65.8	63.9	1.8	- 17.8	- 5.0	- 12.8	- 0.2	
1984	5,145.7	- 4.7	64.3	62.9	1.4	- 9.1	- 9.0	- 0.1	3.0	
1985	5,136.5	- 9.2	66.1	62.4	3.7	- 12.6	- 9.7	- 2.9	- 0.3	
1986	5,121.0	- 15.5	66.8	65.2	1.6	- 16.1	- 11.5	- 4.6	- 1.0	
1987	5,112.1	- 8.9	66.0	61.2	4.7	- 15.0	- 11.4	- 3.6	1.4	
1988	5,094.0	- 18.1	66.9	62.0	4.9	- 24.7	- 17.1	- 7.6	- 1.7	

Notes: (1) Includes estimated war deaths of non-civilians and merchant seamen abroad (74,000 in 1914-18 and 34,000 in 1939-45).

Registrar General Scotland, Annual Report 1988

England should increase by over 2 million, Wales by 120,000 and Northern Ireland by over 70,000.

There is no room for dogmatic certainty about the future trend of birth rates but there are reasonable assumptions. Lower child-bearing is probably linked to the broadening of women's aspirations and opportunities and improved access to birth control. With higher levels of participation by women in the labour market and in higher education, the trend towards lower birth rates is likely to be strengthened rather than weakened. It appears that a low natural increase in population, possibly falling to zero natural growth is the pattern we can expect in the richer countries. There may be a period in the 1990s in Scotland when birth rates rise slightly because of the higher proportion of women in the child-bearing age range but this will be a temporary factor.

TABLE 2: General fertility rate: live births per 1000 women aged 15-44, 1901-85, England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland

Year	England and Wales	Scotland	Year	Northern Ireland
1901-05	113.0	120.2 ¹	1900-02	99.7 ²
1906-10	105.3	112.1 ³	-	-
1911-15	95.4	105.6	1910-12	101.8 ²
1916-20	80.2	95.3	-	-
1921-5	80.3	94.5	1920-2	104.8
1926-30	67.8	83.1	1925-7	93.9
1931-5	61.7	76.8	1930-2	87.7
1936-40	60.9	73.3	-	84.5
1941-5	67.2	75.9	-	93.2
1946-50	80.6	87.6	-	95.1
1951-5	72.5	81.7	-	96.7
1956-60	81.8	92.5	-	106.1
1961-5	91.3	97.6	-	113.9
1966-70	87.5	91.5	-	111.8
1971-5	72.8	74.2	-	97.2
1976-80	61.9	62.0	-	86.4
1981	61.3	63.8	-	84.3
1982	59.9	59.8	-	82.6
1983	59.7	58.9	-	82.0
1984	59.8	58.4	-	-
1985	61.0	59.5	-	-

Notes: 1. Figures for 1900-1905.

2. Estimated from Eire figures to be comparable with later years.

3. Excludes 1908.

Sources: OPCS, *Birth Statistics*, Series FM1, no.1, Table 1.16, 1974;
 OPCS, *Birth Statistics*, Series FM1, no.7, Table 1.16 1980;
 OPCS, *Birth Statistics*, Series FM1, no.12, Table 1.16 1985;
 Registrar-General, Scotland, *Annual Reports* for relevant years up to 1930;
 no.114 (1968) Part II (*Population and Vital Statistics*) Table S1.6; no.117
 (1971) Part II (*Population and Vital Statistics*) Table S1.5; no.126 (1980)
 Table S1.5; Table S2.1 in *Annual Reports* no.127 (1981), no.128 (1982),
 no.129 (1983), no.130 (1984) and no.131 (1985);
 CSO, *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, No. 84 (1935-46) to date;
 Registrar-General Northern Ireland, *Annual Report*, no.59, Table C1 and E;
 no.60, Table C1 and E; no.61, Table C1; no.62, Table C1 and E1.

British Social Trends since 1900, Ed. A.H. Halsey. 1988.

It is migration loss which has produced Scotland's historically low population growth and her current population decline. Were that loss spread evenly over the population as a whole, it would still be highly significant. But it is concentrated in certain sections of the population and this makes its impact greater. Apart from some cases of forced migration, migratory behaviour generally involves young adults. [See Table 3].

TABLE 3: Estimated net migration, by sex and age, Scotland, year ending 30 June 1988

Age	Both sexes	Male	Female
0-14	- 3,860	- 2,020	- 1,840
15-29	-15,600	- 8,500	- 7,100
30-44	- 4,610	- 2,720	- 1,890
45-64	+ 420	+ 100	+ 320
65+	+ 650	+ 350	+ 300
All ages	-23,000	-12,790	-10,210

Notes: 1. "Net migration" means the difference between total emigration and total immigration and includes "other changes".

2. A + sign signifies a net gain; a - sign a net loss.

Registrar General Scotland Annual Report 1988

Of Scottish migratory losses in 1988, 68% were in the 15-29 age range. In contrast, among the elderly there is a small net gain from migration which we might expect would increase since it is the section of the population which is growing most rapidly. Despite the disproportionate loss of the young through migration, Scotland's proportion of the retired is lower than the UK average because we also have the highest death rate in Western Europe, possibly an economic advantage but one whose desirability is questionable.

The areas of loss are also of interest since they are not evenly spread throughout Scotland. [See Table 4].

The 'new' Glasgow still has a disproportionate share of the out-migration from Scotland. With less than 20% of the population, Greater Glasgow had over 30% of the net migration loss at national level in 1987-8. The case of the Highlands is particularly interesting in that it now has a small net population gain from migration from other parts of Scotland and from elsewhere, a development to which we shall return. The high loss from Grampian in that year is almost certainly oil-related. Grampian has gained population from both internal and external migration during the 70s and the early 80s. The sharp downturn in oil activity in the mid 80s has put this trend into reverse.

We do not have the information on the occupational categories which make up the migration loss but we can draw certain conclusions from developments in UK and international labour markets. In the past there was a demand for skilled and semi-skilled male manual workers as well as for those with higher education. There was also a less prohibitive housing market in many areas of high labour demand in the UK. Until the 1970's a number of overseas countries not only had an open-door policy for the healthy and employable, they were still pursuing an active recruitment strategy. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, in particular offered attractive

TABLE 4: Estimated net migration, by destination, to region and health board area, Scotland, year ending 30 June 1988

Area	Total net	Within Scotland	Outside Scotland
SCOTLAND	-23,000	- 0	-23,000
Region - Health board Area			
Borders	+ 720	+ 810	- 90
Central (Forth Valley HBA)	- 850	+ 470	- 1,320
Dumfries & Galloway	+ 510	+ 170	+ 340
Fife	- 260	+ 590	- 850
Grampian	- 2,730	+ 840	- 3,570
Highland	+ 1,100	+ 270	+ 830
Lothian	- 3,420	- 670	- 2,750
Strathclyde	-18,370	-3,420	-14,950
Tayside	+ 320	+1,110	- 790
Orkney	+ 110	- 40	+ 150
Shetland	- 130	- 10	- 120
Western Isles	- 0	- 120	+ 120
Strathclyde Health Areas			
Argyll & Clyde HBA	- 1,700	+ 340	- 2,040
Ayrshire & Arran HBA	- 530	+1,200	- 1,730
Greater Glasgow HBA	-12,140	-4,600	- 7,540
Lanarkshire HBA	- 4,000	- 360	- 3,640

Notes: 1. "Net migration" means the difference between total emigration and total immigration and includes "other changes".

2. A + sign signifies a net gain; a - sign a net loss.

Registrar General, Scotland, *Annual Report 1988*.

opportunities even for people who did not have high qualifications. The situation over the past twenty years has changed. Overseas countries have faced their own unemployment problems since the recession of the early 1970's and their only labour shortages are in specific skilled categories. They are now very highly selective in the applicants they accept. In England, as elsewhere, demand for the semi-skilled male manual worker has sharply declined and in areas of higher labour demand there are serious shortages of low-cost housing. As a result recent migration has had little to offer the less skilled unless they are spouses moving with partners in higher occupational categories. We cannot assume from this that the low skilled do not migrate. London's 'cardboard city' produces evidence that they do. Centrepont, the charity seeking to aid the homeless, has estimated that 20% of the young who sleep rough in London are Scots⁽³⁾. But this is not mainstream migration. In the rational calculation of advantages and disadvantages, it is now only the highly qualified who can expect to gain.

The effect of migration loss is not, therefore, just a numerical one but a qualitative one. Our losses are concentrated among the young and the skilled. Net out-migration shows no sign of diminishing. Although it declined after the peak post-war period of 1961-71, this would appear to have been caused more by decline in migration opportunity than in migration demand. The 1978-88 loss was 164,000 and while the official projected loss for the 1990's is 13,000 per annum, the loss of 24,700 in 1987-88 suggests that this may be an underestimate. If the external demand increases, it would be reasonable to expect that Scotland's migration loss will increase.

We have seen the effect of migration loss on Scotland's overall population. When we look specifically at the labour market, those sections of the population in employment or actively seeking work, the significance of migration may be increasing. The Labour Force Survey⁽⁴⁾ estimates that Scotland will have the highest percentage drop in the UK in the number of under-25s in the labour force - a decline of 29% between 1988 and 2000. This could be higher if migration losses do turn out to be greater than current projections. While other regions will experience a reduction in the younger age group, most will continue to see an increase in the overall size of their labour force up till the end of the century. The decline in birth rates will take time to work through and for a period will be more than compensated for by the increase in the number of older workers and the higher participation rate of women. Increases in the size of the labour force are expected to be as large as 14% in South-West England, 13% in East Anglia, with the East Midlands rising by 7% and the South-East by 6%. But it is estimated that Scotland, together with the North and North-West will experience a steady and immediate decline in the overall labour force, even with higher female participation rates. While the relatively greater fall in the Scottish birth rate will be a contributory factor to these changes, it is principally migration which is the determining variable.

The decline in the number of young adults entering the labour market is likely to become a problem in most industrially advanced countries and this will coincide with an increasing demand for skilled labour. There is an estimated increase of one million jobs in the UK between 1987-95 in professional and related jobs⁽⁵⁾. The Scottish Council (Development and Industry) has calculated that an increase of 100,000 jobs in Scotland is likely with substantial increase in demand for those with higher educational qualifications⁽⁶⁾. Were these factors of increasing demand for skilled labour together with decreasing supply applicable to Scotland alone, we might expect this to produce a marked decline in migration. But, of course, these factors which apply to Scotland are also in evidence in other parts of the UK and abroad. We can expect improved job opportunities in Scotland for the well-qualified young and, indeed, for the less qualified also, but this will take place in the context of better job opportunities elsewhere. Since 'elsewhere' is very much larger than Scotland, the range of attractive jobs with good career prospects is going to be even greater. In the past it has not been the periods of

greatest depression which have produced the highest levels of loss but periods of increasing opportunities, for example, during the 50's and 60's. The effect of these changes on the less skilled may be more complex. It will depend on the extent to which the female participation rate can be increased and on the prospects for using more older workers in routine service jobs. Labour-saving technology may be an option in some occupations but it does not provide an obvious solution in much service employment. So employment opportunities ought to improve but to a lesser extent than for the skilled. There would have to be major increases in regional earnings differentials and in low-cost housing provision to make migration to other parts of the UK a more attractive option for those with few qualifications.

What we can expect, therefore, are conflicting pressures. On the one hand there ought to be more job opportunities in Scotland with improved conditions because of the greater competition for the available labour. On the other hand the demand in other parts of the UK and abroad will also be higher. The attractions are not purely financial. They include the range of work available, the prospects for career development, the attractiveness of the environment in which people will live and work. It is not possible to predict where this balance of conflicting pressures will settle. Better job prospects in Scotland might be expected to reduce migration but increased prospects elsewhere could increase it. An Industry Department for Scotland discussion paper⁽⁷⁾ commented: "... given the better employment prospects generally for graduates remaining in Scotland, there may be less of an exodus of Scottish domiciled graduates going south to find employment, and an opportunity exists for Scottish employers to capture more of those graduating in Scotland. By the same token, however, there is a risk that very acute shortages elsewhere may result in enhanced outflows from Scotland." The capacity to hold Scottish graduates will be a particularly testing one. Scottish graduate migration has always been high⁽⁸⁾. Evidence suggests that Scotland was losing out increasingly in the 80's in graduate employment. The Labour Force Survey⁽⁹⁾ estimated that in 1983 Scotland had 9.4% of the British graduate population in employment. By 1987 this was 7%, that is 14,000 fewer despite little change in the total numbers in employment in Scotland. Over this period the number of graduates working in Britain went up by 283,000 and the numbers increased or remained static in every other region. Of Glasgow University's Scottish domiciled 1988 graduates, 33% left Scotland for their first job⁽¹⁰⁾. The 1988 figure for Strathclyde University was over 40%. The overwhelming majority went to England. These figures almost certainly understate the proportion of Scottish graduates who will eventually make their principal place of work outside Scotland. Although some migrant graduates will come back, more are likely to go in second or subsequent jobs. In a historical study of Aberdeen graduate migration from 1860-1960, more graduates were found to be working outside Scotland in their last reported job than in their first, particularly the number overseas was higher⁽¹¹⁾. Graduates are, therefore, already a highly migration-prone group and given the central importance of knowledge-based investment in modern economic development, the ability to hold a substantial

pool of graduate labour is likely to be critical.

Apart from this direct impact on the labour market, other effects of migration-produced population decline are economic and ecological. The overall economic effects of migration loss and population decline are not simple to assess. There are positive and negative aspects. The labour market effects are not entirely negative. They may create some problems for employers but they will strengthen the position of employees. Employers may increasingly have to respect and value their workers more and use their skills with care. The other economic implications involve public investment, growth implications, and entrepreneurial effects.

There is a real and long-standing loss to Scottish society in investing heavily in education, health and welfare services for young people who then leave in the economically active period of their lives. Receiving countries gain well-educated, healthy, economically-active young people with no investment cost. They gain them at a period when they can be expected to make a very positive contribution to the economy, to be a source of tax revenue, and to cost little in terms of use of social services. There is no evidence of any significant 'remittance' tradition among Scottish migrants transferring resources back to Scotland, a process typical of many migratory groups. This economic disadvantage is compounded if people come back to Scotland at a much later stage in their lives or if there is in-migration by other older age-groups. To a modest extent this is happening. If it increases, it could be economically expensive and Scotland would be losing out in public investment terms at both ends of the life-cycle. Those migrants who have gone abroad are a straight loss. Those who have gone to England are partially an accounting loss. Because of unitary central taxation, some of the investment is not paid specifically by Scotland but will be attributed as public investment in Scotland. But services paid for by local taxation are a direct loss. This is not trivial when you consider the net loss of 836,000 since 1951 and the fact that the educational profile of these migrants has been higher than average. Well-qualified people have been one of Scotland's most buoyant exports but one from whom there has been little return. If it is assumed that high unemployment is endemic in the Scottish economy, then it might be argued that the safety valve of migration reduces the public expenditure costs of unemployment. However, since those who are leaving are likely to be the well-qualified, the impact on unemployment if they had stayed would not necessarily have been a simple numerical one.

The entrepreneurial deficit created by migration is an intriguing but highly speculative factor. Scotland has a low rate of new business start-ups⁽¹²⁾. This is particularly the case in those regions of greatest migration loss but the connection is likely to be an indirect one. This is a problem which has probably no single explanation. Almost by definition, many of those who migrate considerable distances require higher levels of initiative and a preparedness for some risk-taking. Given that most are now likely to have higher than average qualifications, this combination of qualities is what might be expected

in other circumstances to produce candidates for entrepreneurial activity. As long as migration is readily available as a route to advancement and one sanctioned by tradition and common usage, it may deplete the pool of the enterprising young. Looked at on a year-to-year basis this might not seem a significant contributory factor. If you take a longer-term perspective the figures become more striking; a net loss of almost two million this century; of 836,000 since 1951; and of 165,000 between 1978-88. These are big figures for a small country. The least one can say about migration loss and the entrepreneurial deficit is that it has not helped. We cannot be sure how much it has hindered.

The general impact of population decline on economic development has not been a popular area of contemporary economic analysis for the obvious reason that there have been few economies for which it has been a problem. Some of the more relevant work has been on zero growth or declining population growth rather than actual reduction, especially reduction produced by migration. Most countries are still experiencing population growth and are likely to go on doing so into the next century, although at a reduced rate. In theory the same GDP can be generated by and divided among a smaller population and the overall level of demand may be unaffected although there may be sectoral implications. "The problem of the cessation of population growth is basically one of adjustment to a new economic environment which needs to be more capital intensive"⁽¹³⁾. This would need to apply even more so when we are dealing with population decline. In practice this is likely to be more complex. A rising population provides an automatic stimulus to the economy, other things being equal, and the decline in both the labour force and total population puts this into reverse unless there is increased investment or other economic changes.

The one aspect of population decline which is the most positive is the ecological. The days of associating national prestige and well-being with population size have almost passed. The 'cost' of people has started to figure fairly highly in the current economic pressures facing governments. Waste disposal costs, atmospheric pollution, transport congestion, housing and land shortages – these diminish the attractions of rising population. In this respect Scotland is well-placed, ironically so, in that the principal reason for our very favourable ratio of land to people is our historically high migration losses. It is an asset whose advantages are not fully realised because of the very uneven distribution of population, with 80% concentrated in a third of the land area. This is particularly so since under-population has its own economic costs. Nevertheless, space is now one of Scotland's most important assets – or potential assets. If our population remained static or grew very slowly, this would not diminish our environmental advantages vis-a-vis other areas. Further population decline is unlikely to contribute much ecological advantage in Scotland's case. Also migration-led population decline in comparison with that occurring from birth/death rate changes, involves highly selective losses.

Having looked at some of the implications of migration loss, the balance sheet appears to be a negative one. The most positive factor is the ecological, but falling birth rates are starting to produce low to zero growth in any case. Migration as an unemployment solution will be less important in the coming years with fewer entrants into the labour market unless there is major recession. In this respect it has always had the disadvantage of disguising the extent of the problem and thus reducing the pressure to find solutions other than the export of labour. Of course there can be very positive aspects to migration if it is roughly in balance. Experience out of Scotland may be a source of fresh ideas and stimulation but only if there is early return migration or sufficient in-migration in comparable social categories. But for Scotland neither the return migration or the in-migration has been sufficient at any time to cover the losses.

If the effects of out-migration are generally negative for Scottish society, the question arises as to whether migration patterns can be changed and whether anything can be done through public policy initiatives. In theory migration is one of the demographic variables which can change quickly. There is no inherent reason why the officially projected loss of 130,000 during the 1990's could not turn into a gain. Even if losses were reduced to around 3,000 per annum, this could secure zero growth not decline. Birth-rate changes are long-term in their effect and complex in the factors influencing them. Death rates are not within anyone's control in the short-term and possibly not in the long-term either. But migration is generally a conscious decision by an adult to move or to stay after weighing up the options. Because of the high level of rationality which is involved, the decision ought to be comparatively straight-forward to influence. But is it? Can Governments influence such decisions? Scottish historical experience must prove daunting to any optimistic expectation about reducing or reversing migration loss. Scotland has experienced that loss with remarkable consistency since records began and probably long before that. We cannot look to any period and say things were different. We can point to periods of greater or lesser loss but these seem to be related more strongly not to changes in demand but to changes in the supply of external opportunities.

We need to have more understanding of motivation before we can attempt informed judgements about what might alter behaviour. While people's conscious interpretation of their motivation may not reveal all the factors influencing their decisions, it is an important starting point in understanding what is influential. This is one of the great under-researched areas in 20th century Scottish society. There is little material on motivation in distance migration. Indeed the whole area of modern migration has aroused little interest, perhaps because it has been one of the great 'taken for granted' aspects of Scottish society. Also it was not such a visible problem. Immigrants who are culturally distinctive are a visible phenomenon and have been regarded in England as a highly relevant research area. But the absent tend to

be less of a perceived problem except when depopulation becomes so marked that it threatens community breakdown. Depopulation for most of Scotland was not an obvious problem since, until recently, high birth rates kept the population growing slowly. There has normally been an excess supply of labour and a shortage of adequate housing (a severe shortage for most of the century), therefore the problem could be perceived as one of having too many people. There has been the additional difficulty of studying those who left. By definition they are dispersed and it is difficult to get access to an appropriate population.

Concern about graduate migration offered an opportunity to reach an appropriate population of Scottish migrants in order to examine these questions of motivation. As one part of a wider study of graduate migration, we tried to reach a number of Scottish graduates who had moved overseas. Strathclyde University's alumni relations programme distributes a magazine to former graduates. Five thousand of these go overseas and cover all graduates for whom there are addresses. These include a large number of graduates who were not originally Scottish domiciled but the proportion of these on the distribution list was unknown. Strathclyde has had a regular inflow of students from Scandinavia, the Far and Middle East and from England but the logistical problems of excluding those whom it was considered might not have been originally Scottish were too great and could not have been entirely accurate. A questionnaire was included in the magazine mailing to all five thousand with a request that only those who were originally of Scottish domicile should reply. Given the problems of that type of mailing reaching its destination and being opened, together with the numbers who would not have been originally domiciled, it is probably optimistic to expect that 50% reached a relevant population. There were 214 valid responses from 44 countries. A number of others came mistakenly from graduates who had not been domiciled in Scotland. It is intended to repeat this exercise with a sample of graduates from other parts of the UK and there is also currently a survey of third-year undergraduates. The questions most immediately relevant to conscious motivation were those asking about the principal reasons for moving out of Scotland, the principal reasons for remaining out of Scotland, and desire and likelihood of returning. Respondents were obviously a biased group in that they do not include graduates who left Scotland for a period and then returned. That bias may be somewhat countered by the fact that they have enough of a continuing interest in a country which many of them left a considerable number of years ago to read an alumni magazine and reply to a questionnaire.

Although replies were received from a large number of countries, they were heavily weighted towards three, very much in line with patterns of Scottish migration. Twenty-five per cent came from Canada, 21% from the United States and 11% from Australia. Twenty-one per cent were from 12 European countries, West Germany and Switzerland being the two best represented. It is generally assumed that motivation for migration is primarily

economic and one of the key points of interest was to get some (inevitably rather crude) indication of the extent to which this was true. Respondents were asked to select in order of importance the factors which influenced their decision to leave. Forty-seven per cent selected work opportunities as the main reason influencing their decision to go abroad. Of these only a small proportion, 9%, suggested that the problem was difficulty in getting a job in Scotland. The majority, 59%, indicated that it was getting a job with appropriate career prospects which was important and 17% said it was getting work which was more financially rewarding. It would appear that for those leaving primarily for work reasons, it is the quality of employment and the perceived scope for career development which were the most important aspects. Twenty-nine per cent of respondents selected 'to broaden horizons' as their principal reason for migrating. It was an expression which almost a third of the sample identified with as the primary motivating factor in their decision to leave Scotland. Only one other reason was important: 11% gave 'family or other social relationships' as their reason for leaving, another non-economic factor. Only a few (3%) gave money as their main reason for migrating.

The pattern of responses shifts significantly when we come to look at reasons for not returning to Scotland. The most popular first preference reason is still work opportunities, but only 26% gave this as compared with 47% who said it was their main reason for moving in the first place. Predictably 'family and other social relations' become more important with 22% giving this as their reason for not returning to Scotland. People who may initially have no particular intention of staying, do marry, have children, become integrated into a social network and, as many commented, without consciously having made a decision not to return to Scotland, they find that the decision has just 'happened'. Although they may still have strong family ties in Scotland, it is the primary family commitments in their adopted country which determines the choice. 'Lifestyle' also increases in popularity as a principal reason for not returning. Eighteen per cent gave this as their reason, feeling that they now have a lifestyle which could not be reproduced in Scotland. Nine per cent gave money as a reason for not returning as opposed to 3% who gave it as a reason for going in the first place. So while economic reasons continue to be important in keeping people from returning to Scotland, they decline in importance relative to the socio/cultural reasons.

The survey examined both feelings about returning to Scotland and the likelihood of this taking place. Thirty-four per cent had no interest in returning, while 16% expressed a positive desire to do so. The largest category, 50%, comprised those who still had some interest in returning but also reasons for remaining. When asked if they thought they would in fact return, 13% said yes without qualification; 13% said they might when they retired; and 34% said maybe. A realistic assessment is that there is some genuine potential for return migration, perhaps as much as 20% with a serious interest in returning while they are still economically active. But this will be dependent largely on the availability of appropriate employment for people

who are skilled and experienced and often in specialised jobs.

These responses should not make us optimistic about successfully attracting many overseas migrants back and the expected increase in external demand for young, highly-skilled labour will put pressure on our capacity to hold more of the new generation. Can change in migration patterns take place? There is a striking case of migration reversal within Scotland which does show that history can be turned round. The one part of Scotland which embodied in the most dramatic and often poignant way the problems of out-migration was the Highlands and Islands. It was the area in which migration loss was most highly visible and which had experienced substantial decline while Scotland as a whole was still undergoing slow population growth. Between 1921-61 the area lost almost a quarter of its population with consequent effects on its age structure. By 1961 the population had fallen to 302,000 from a level of 424,000 in 1851. It was this alarming population decline in an area already very sparsely populated which more than any other factor led to the establishment of the Highlands and Islands Development Board. The Highlands and Islands are now experiencing a small positive gain from migration and this has been part of a steady, twenty-year turn-around. It is an exceptional reversal of fortunes given the long-standing historical trends in the region and the fact that Scotland as a whole has not experienced this change in migration patterns. Nor is there one simple explanation like the oil industry since the reduction in migration loss had started before there was any major employment impact from oil development⁽¹⁴⁾. This is not to underestimate the significance of the oil factor but to put it in its place as one among a range of influences. Population levels started to stabilise after the mid-sixties and increased by 25,000 between 1971-81, largely through migration since natural increase was very small. Modest migration gains have continued throughout the 80's in Highland Region - 3,434 between 1981-87. In 1988 the Region gained over 1,000 from migration, about 25% from other parts of Scotland and the remainder from other parts of the UK, although some of these may be return migrants. Population increases have been widely spread⁽¹⁵⁾ and have taken place in most areas.

This population increase has not come primarily from the stereotypical retired 'white settler'. For example, the percentage of young people in the Highlands has increased. The 25-44 age group, having been below the Scottish average in 1961 and 1971, was slightly above it in 1981. The proportion of under-four year olds is now above the Scottish average. Oil played an important part in giving a boost to employment as three other large projects had done previously, Dounreay, British Aluminium and the Lochaber pulp mill. But the closure of two of these developments and the contraction of both Dounreay and oil-related development did not appear to reverse the progress towards both a modest increase in population and an improved age structure. The widespread nature of small migration-based population gains suggests that they did not rest only on a few large developments. It would appear that the reversal of historically high migration losses has arisen from a combination

of factors. Some economic expansion comes from a few large projects but also from investment in fishing, agriculture, tourism, infrastructure and some small-scale manufacturing. But since the region is not only holding people more effectively than Scotland as a whole but attracting modest numbers of people, we may have to look at environmental/lifestyle factors as part of the explanation. This may have significant implications for Scotland and highlight the positive advantages which have the potential both to keep and to attract people.

While the Highlands and Islands offers a positive example of reversing migration loss, the country whose migration problem has historically been similar but even more serious, the Irish Republic, does not present an encouraging example. One in twenty of the population has left since 1982, and 1988-9 saw a 46,000 loss⁽¹⁶⁾. Despite the highest birth rate in Europe, its population has just gone into decline and it is estimated that like Scotland about 30% of its graduates migrate. This is despite considerable effort and some modest success in attracting inward investment. Unlike Scotland, the Irish Government does identify this as a serious social and economic problem and has tried to produce new policy initiatives to modify the migration problem. One project recently started is designed to encourage return migration by the highly skilled. It involves building up records of 'strategic workers' overseas and keeping them in contact with employment opportunities in Ireland. It will be interesting to see if there is any evidence of positive results from such a project. In Scotland's case we have seen from our graduate sample that there is a small proportion with a definite interest in returning and since this is a group into which expensive educational investment has gone, it may be worthwhile initiating a similar project.

But while attracting return migration should not be dismissed as a hopeless proposition, it is not likely to be any more than a marginal factor. No matter what their original intention may have been, once people have gone there are strong reasons which keep them away. The important focus of any migration strategy must be on encouraging the skilled young to stay as their first preference. The positive factor in developing a feasible strategy is that we know the most migration-prone categories and can concentrate attention on them. The young who have recently completed some form of higher education are the people we most want to keep and are a readily identifiable and accessible group. But there has to be a positive prospectus for them and that above all means interesting job opportunities with good prospects for career development and for the exercise of responsibility and initiative. We also have to start selling Scotland's attractions and its future prospects to the young with as much effort as is used to sell Scotland to inward investors. To be convincing there has to be a product worth selling, a future that looks genuinely positive and attractive.

Since constitutional change is on the Scottish horizon, what, if any, might the effect be on migratory behaviour? Any consideration of this has to be

speculative but if we assume that initially the effects on the economy of such change are neutral, the establishment of a Scottish Parliament ought to bring some decline in migration loss. The establishment of such a Parliament will bring with it a number of attractive and interesting jobs in administration, research and the media. It will also bring, as any legislature does, the offices of commercial and professional organisations, and interest groups. These are the kind of jobs attractive to ambitious young people. Since we have seen that one of the major reasons why many people leave is the non-economic one of adventure, experience, etc., the psychological dimension of constitutional change ought also to be a plus factor. Initially it will bring the optimism of fresh opportunity and the excitement of change. What the longer-term effect will be on migration will probably depend on the economic results of such change. If, as in the case of Ireland, the quality and quantity of job opportunities do not satisfy the aspirations of the young adults, then constitutional change will not reverse trends. If, on the other hand, it stimulates the supply of good quality jobs and the development of a more attractive physical and social environment, then we ought to expect some sustainable reduction in migration loss.

Whatever efforts are made to reverse Scotland's migration loss, the realistic assumption is that these may not produce any major change but at best might stop further deterioration. Public policy will have to be developed on the assumption that population decline will continue. The more effective use of a declining labour supply is likely to make the education and training debate as central to the 90's as it was in the 60's.

Isobel Lindsay, Sociology Division, Department of Government, Strathclyde University, Glasgow.

References

1. Hough J. Social Policy and the Birth Rate, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol.8, 1988.
2. Unless otherwise stated, population statistics are from *Population Trends* and the *Report of the Registrar General Scotland*.
3. *The Herald*, 26.3.90.
4. 'Regional Labour Force Outlook to the Year 2000', *Employment Gazette*, January 1990.
5. *Review of the Economy and Employment 1988*. Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick.
6. 'Tomorrow's Jobs in Scotland', Scottish Council Development and Industry, Edinburgh, 1988.
7. 'New Entrants to the Labour Market in Scotland in the 1990's'. Industry Department for Scotland. ESU Discussion Paper 19, 1989.
8. See Mackay D, *Geographical Mobility and the Brain Drain*, 1969 and *The Toothill Report on the Scottish Economy*, Scottish Council Development and Industry, 1961.
9. Creigh S and Rees A. 'Graduates and the Labour Market in the 1980's'. *Employment Gazette*, January 1989.

10. Glasgow University *Annual Report of the Appointments Committee 1987-88*.
11. Mackay, *ibid*.
12. Standing Commission on the Scottish Economy, *Final Report 1989*.
13. Espenshade T and Serow W. *The Economic Consequences of Slowing Population Growth*, 1978, London.
14. Walker C and McCleery, 'Economic and Social Change in the Highlands and Islands', *Scottish Economic Bulletin* No.35, 1987.
15. Walker and McCleery, *ibid*.
16. 'The Generation That Turned Its Back on Ireland', *Financial Times*, 7.10.89.